DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 208 263 CE 030 440

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TITLE Teaching Styles in Adult Education. An Exploratory Essay.
PUB DATE [80]
NOTE 24p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Education; Cognitive Style; Interpersonal Relationship; Leadership Styles; Life Style; Personality; *Teacher Behavior; Teacher Education; Teacher Effectiveness; *Teacher Improvement; Teacher Response; *Teaching Styles

ABSTRACT

Teaching styles can be considered from two approaches--the life style approach and the spectrum approach. The first is a relatively static approach borrowed from management research and organizational development. It identifies teaching styles based on Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of human needs. Teaching styles are seen as the interpersonal styles of behavior with others that grow out of people's needs and are the means of resolving personal concerns. By adapting Lafferty's (1975) management styles to teaching, one can describe seven teaching styles: achievement, self-actualized, humanistic-helpful, approval, oppositional power, and competence. The second approach, the spectrum design advanced by Mosston (1966, 1972), is based on the assumption that teaching style is a learned characteristic. It assumes that teachers can be trained to use alternative behaviors to fit various learning styles. According to this approach, seven teaching styles can be differentiated: command, practice, reciprocal, "slanty rope" or individual program style, guided discovery, problem solving, and creativity. (YLB)

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Teaching Styles in Adult Education

An Exploratory Essay

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Introduction

Style starts the moment a teacher walks into a classroom. It's the teacher's personality. It's a cocoon students build around the teacher in their minds. It is a promise of liveliness, intrigue, humor, gusto, fairness, friendliness, and the acquisition of knowledge and/or skills.

Teaching styles in adult education has been written on the basis of my conviction that teaching style influences teaching and learning behaviors, and that it is linked to certain personality traits of teachers. Effective adult educators are teachers who are successful in reaching more students and in creating more diverse environments for learning. Staff development activities, in educational settings, have given some attention to style, particularly to ways which could improve teachers' effectiveness in their classrooms. Traditionally, most of the work on teaching styles concerned itself with techniques such as seeking information whether teachers lecture or lead discussions or whether they are rigid and demanding or spontaneous and encouraging.

In this paper, teaching style will be viewed not as "elegant mannerisms, but a means by which one personality moves others" (Lucas, 1962).

In borrowing from management and organizational development literature, teaching styles will also be viewed as management activities that focus human energy toward some specific outcomes. The underlying assumption about style is based on McGregor's view of management style, namely, that the style of teachers (and of managers) is a result of their lifetime of coping with reality and that it is deeply rooted in

their "fundamental beliefs, [their] values, [their] perceptions of themselves and [their] lifetime of experience" (McGregor, 1967). In other words, teaching style is related to teachers' life styles, which is the way persons behave toward the world, and that determines how they will respond to others and how they see themselves. "It consists of a series of automatic responses to persons and groups that occur almost without thought, as though they were reflex actions" (Lafferty, 1975).

This exploratory analysis will consider teaching styles from: (1) a theory of the hierarchy of human needs described in Maslow's Motivation and Personality (1970) and developed by Lafferty in "Life Styles Inventory" (1975) and (2) a training model for improving teaching advanced by Mosston (1966, 1972) which attempts to identify and clarify the structure of teaching behaviors.

The life style approach

There is a prevalent assumption that style manifests itself in teaching skills and techniques. Consequently, many educators believe that it:

> can be developed in rather simple ways such as adding to or updating their grasp of subject matter, improving their organization of materials, adding to their knowledge and use of technical adjuncts to teaching, and improving such specific skills as those of lecturing, discussing, testing and grading (Eble, 1979, p. 4).

University faculty seem to be reluctant to accept the role of personality in teaching because their thinking is dominated by a scientific outlook, which supports their belief that teaching is impersonal and objective. However, teachers who work in other

educational organizations, which compete with similar organizations for the same clients, have recognized that the role of personality in teaching is essential to maintaining their students' interest and continued participation. They have also recognized that teaching style is linked to personality and character, as well as to techniques and skills. Studies of university faculty are the major source of information about teaching styles and teacher behavior; however, they are limited by the reluctance of the faculty to accept the role of personality in teaching, and by descriptions of teaching techniques. Eble (1979), who studied the relationship between teaching styles and their influence on students, pointed out the relative paucity of information on teaching style linked to personality. He suggests that college students have "an overwhelming preference for a professor who sees himself, and is seen, as a teacher rather than a researcher, administrator or socialite" (Eble, 1979, p. 4). Because of this lack, I decided to look to management and organizational development for information about leadership and management styles. Teachers can be seen as leaders and managers, and data from one discipline can illuminate another, enhancing teachers' understandings of themselves and therefore, presumably, their style.

The work of Fiedler (1967), Likert (1961), McGregor (1967), and Jacobs (1971) suggests that leadership in any organization, whether formal or social, is a transactional process between the leader and the led, in which there is an exchange of rewards, from which each mutually benefits. The leader contributes to the transaction by making valuable

contributions to the group's goal attainment. For these contributions the leader, in turn, is rewarded by the group by means of position, the status and esteem that goes with it, and their productivity (Jacobs, 1971).

In adult education settings, students are viewed as persons who have achieved full physical development and who expect to have the right to participate as responsible homemakers, workers, students and members of society, and who have the authority and power to make decisions about their lives (Houle, 1972). Hence, teachers who work in competitive adult education settings, where students exercise their adult prerogatives, ought to demonstrate a leadership style that avoids direct confrontations, and is based on interpersonal interaction skills required to move people and groups toward mutually determined goals, without interactions that make evident power and status differentials (Jacobs, 1971).

Leadership style, just as management and teaching style, emerges, according to McGregor (1960), "as a result of a lifetime of coping with reality" and is rooted in leaders/teachers/managers' fundamental beliefs, values, and perceptions of themselves, and the experiences during their lifetimes. In other words, teaching style is related to teachers' life styles and their personalities, which is the way they behave toward the world, how they respond to others, and how they see themselves. Life style "consists of a series of automatic responses to persons and groups that occur almost without thought, as though they were reflex actions" (Lafferty, 1975).

In this paper, the activity of learning anything is viewed as a form of change in behavior; teaching is viewed as a process that

fosters this change. Participants in this process are viewed as "capable of creative life-affirming, self- and other regarding and respecting responses, choices and actions" (Chinn & Benne, 1978), if they find themselves in situations in which the conditions do not thwart these responses. Rogers (1969) has suggested that trustworthiness, emphathy, and caring are behaviors which will encourage these responses. Maslow (1970) has worked out a similar idea in his analysis of needs. He theorized that experienced needs are the primary influences on individuals' behaviors. When a particular need emerges, it determines the individual's behavior in terms of motivations, priorities, and actions. Maslow (1970) developed a method for explaining behavior by providing categories of needs in a hierarchical structure. He placed all human needs, from primitive or immature (in terms of the behaviors they foster) to civilized or mature needs, into five need systems. He believed that individuals fulfilled needs in ascending order from the most immature (basic) to most mature. The five need systems are as follows: (1) the basic level represents physiological and survival needs such as shelter, food, sex, and other necessities. (2) The second level of the hierarchy consists of safety needs. When individuals have partially fulfilled their basic needs, they will experience tensions relating to needs of security, orderliness, protective rules and general avoidance of risk. (3) When safety needs have been met, individuals become less preoccupied with self and will endeavor to form interpersonal relationships. The relative success in meeting this need for belonging will result in feelings of being accepted and appreciated by others. (4) When individuals feel

secure in their relationships with others, they tend to seek special status with the group. The need tension at this level is associated with ambition and a desire to excel. These ego-status needs will motivate individuals to seek out opportunities to display their competence in an effort to gain social and professional awards. Because ego-status fulfillment depends on the ability of others to respond to the individual's effort to perform in a superior way, it is the most difficult to meet satisfactorily. (5) However, if individuals have gained satisfaction at level four, they may be able to move to level five: self actualization. At this level, individuals concern themselves with personal growth and fulfill this need by becoming more creative, risk-daring, and autonomous.

The progression through the needs hierarchy is seen as the climbing of a ladder where individuals must experience "secure footing" on the first rung to experience the need to step up to the next higher rung. Inability to fulfill a lower-order need or difficulty in fulfilling a lower-order need may result in permanently immature behaviors under stress when the individuals feel that a lower-order need is not fulfilled to their satisfaction.

Life styles, which are the way people behave towards the world and determine how they respond to others and see themselves, are an outgrowth of the needs that develop in people. Lafferty (1975) has developed a Life Styles Inventory which measures basic styles of behavior based on Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs.

> Life styles are interpersonal styles of behavior with others. They grow out of our needs, our methods of resolving our own personal areas of concern and concerns of others. Our desire to resolve those--concerns--to satisfy our needs--creates

> within us tensions; our inability to resolve those concerns and satisfy our needs results in anxiety and anxiety is the direct cause of our defense systems and basic life styles (Lafferty, 1975, p. 8).

The Life Style Inventory is based on the assumption that most people have interpersonal transactions in a "field" of tensions and needs which governs their behavior and guides their transactions.

Lafferty (1975) suggests that these needs be viewed as opposite pairs. The first pair is (1) the concern for security and (2) the concern for satisfaction.

> Satisfaction here means the sense of well-being that comes from doing things for their own sake. . . . Persons in this style are not distracted by self-defeating concerns and because they do things for their own sake, they are effective at what they do and paradoxically achieve the security, the approval and the power that others seek but seldom achieve (Lafferty, 1975, p. 9).

Those for whom security is a salient issue "experience anxiety i.e. tension plus the fear that the need for security cannot or will not be satisfied. This anxiety is manifested by certain types of defensive behaviors which play a predominant role in their interpersonal relations" (p. 9). Their primary behavior is to avoid any real or implied threats to their security.

Another pair of needs is (1) concern for people and (2) concern for task. The styles of those concerned with people are "directed toward seeking and maintaining good interpersonal relationships [with] and among people" (Lafferty, 1975, p. 9). In the work situation these people tend to seek satisfaction through people. Lafferty (1975) found that teachers score high in satisfaction through people, and businessmen score high in satisfaction through tasks.

By adapting Lafferty's (1975) management styles to teaching, I describe seven teaching styles. The descriptions are exaggerated to

help readers discern their own style or those of their teachers; however, in actuality most teachers have elements of all the styles in their teaching behavior. The descriptions follow.

1. Achievement style. Teachers with this style express a maximum concern for task completion. The style is representative of persons who get great satisfaction and personal growth from tasks. Their values are extrinsic. They are precise and objective in their presentations depending on lectures in which they tell and show their students what to do, and, if the subject lends itself, how to do it. They are intolerant of divergent points of view and, unless discussions are part of the teaching task, will not have them in their class. Teachers who possess this style may be best suited to teach precise unambiguous skills.

2. Self-actualized style. Teachers with this style tend to be relaxed, but possess a great deal of drive, and like responsibility. They set store on intrinsic values. They strive to attain their own goals more than those dictated by others. They think that people, things, events, and relationships can be understood, that things fit some pattern, and that the pattern is discernible. They feel optimistic about people and events. They are charismatic and elicit excitement and admiration from their students and peers. They communicate well because they understand the purpose of communication. They value ideas and tolerate, even encourage, divergent points of view and processes. They vary their approaches, they lecture, lead discussion groups, and organize activities. They do not feel that they must be in control or in the center of the learning activity, even though they often are.

3. Humanistic-helpful style. The teacher who has this style is primarily interested in helping others, not as a means of getting ego status, but simply because helping is a pleasurable activity in its own right. Teachers with this style arrange their stimulating classroom activities so that students think for themselves. They enjoy the process of helping students to make their own discoveries or solve their own problems. They have difficulty setting limits to their helpfulness, so they get bogged down in the process of helping and become frustrated when they cannot accommodate all their students. Their primary mode of operation is to establish and maintain an open, friendly, warm, helpful relationship with their students. They are more concerned with caring than being cared for. They possess a strong capacity for developing other people, and will rely heavily on discussions, seminars, and with "developing student capacity to inquire into and reflect on the nature of the environment. . ." (Joyce & Weil, p. 62).

4. Approval style. Teachers who have this style are particularly concerned with other persons' opinions of them and are relatively unconcerned with tasks. Their sense of personal worth is always dependent on others, and they constantly seek approval from others.

Teachers who possess this style constantly entertain their students, if they perceive them to be important. They also try to emulate the style of the most powerful person in their department or institution. Their relationships are conditional on a reciprocal relationship, i.e., I'll accept you if you accept me. Their avoidance of rejection is paramount. Their need for acceptance by students or peers leads them to overly personalize reactions to almost any situation. In a

non-competitive educational setting where students are perceived as powerless, these teachers will be inaccessible, not helpful and not interesting.

5. Oppositional style. The overt behavior of teachers in this style is characterized by resistance, skepticism, and cynicism. These teachers have a detached sense of objectively examining all that is wrong with their students and their work. They find little good and are almost impossible to please. They appear aloof and detached. They negate their own feelings and those of others. They are difficult to work with and often provoke the antagonism and hostility in their students. They seem to avoid becoming close to others; they anticipate rejection; so they handle their need for security by being very task-oriented and demanding. They have no tolerance of ambiguity and divergent thinking. They will pile on the work disregarding student needs, time limitations, or obligations.

If innovative, they may use a behavior modification teaching approach, otherwise they lecture.

6. Power style. In this style the behavior is oriented to using whatever teachers are doing as a means of gaining power, prestige, and influence over others to maintain their security. Teachers with this style seek out positions and situations that will satisfy their need for individual power. They crave prestige and domination to reduce their anxiety. They react hastily if their power (security) is threatened. Characteristic of this style is a general enjoyment in manipulating others. They are convergent (Guilford, 1967) thinkers who tolerate no ambiguity and divergent thinking. They dominate and demand

obedience and loyalty from students, use their work and contributions to enhance their positions, and leave teaching as quickly as they can, to become administrators.

7. Competence style. This teaching style is similar to the achievement style, but with perfectionistic overtones. Teachers who have this style take every opportunity to communicate their superiority to others. They have a maximum concern with the task as a source of satisfaction. They reject their own and others' feelings, and seek external demonstration of competence by their students in narrowly prescribed areas. They often appear to be confident, secure and knowledgable, but may not be. They often scold themselves for failing to measure up to some idealized level of competence. They are always anxious about doing poorly at anything. They have basic needs to influence others, and as teachers will take care to insure their students interesting exciting classes using a variety of techniques. Divergent (Guilford, 1967) thinking is tolerated in moderation as long as it is within the parameters of their intended educational goals.

Teacher styles significantly influence the work of students and their productivity. Adults' use of time is more competitive than that of children or youth. When adults are engaged in a learning activity, another activity gives way. Thus the problem of time allocation constitutes one of the distinctive features of adult education and presents both the learner and teacher with what to do first. In response to this issue, achievement-oriented teachers will tend to develop realistic plans. They also will permit the learners to set goals according to predetermined parameters. They may demand more time commitment than the adult learners allotted, but they demonstrate

the desired behavior and commitment.

Knowles (1970) points out that:

> In order to facilitate adult learning situations, [teachers] must recognize that they differ from children in that (1) adults have more to contribute to the learning of others. . . (2) adults have a richer foundation of experience in which to relate new experiences (3) adults have acquired a large number of fixed habits and patterns of thought and therefore tend to be less open minded (Knowles, 1970, p. 44).

Confronted with an oppositional teacher, adult learners will find themselves in a situation in which their previous experiences are not taken into consideration. They will discover poorly defined relationships and inconsistent expectations. Students contributions will not be sought, because oppositional teachers assume that no one knows anything. Independent thinking is discouraged and motivation is often by criticism and blame. Oppositional teachers often instigate conflict and adversary relationships.

Viewing teaching styles from a perspective of hierarchy of needs is somewhat static and unidimensional. People are not static, though some teachers may think so, nor are teachers static. People are dynamic and multidimensional, like a mobile, constantly presenting different facets of themselves. Teaching styles, too, have different facets. The life style approach is one view, so another view may add to the understanding of teaching styles.

The spectrum of teaching styles: From command to discovery.

This approach is based on the assumptions that teaching behaviors influence learning behaviors, and that teachers can develop alternative teaching styles to improve learning. Mosston (1966), the developer of the approach, believes that individuals have a variety of learning styles. He also believes that teaching styles may be identified, and can, in a

deliberate way, elicit the variety of learning styles that learners demonstrate or that may lie dormant in the behavior of the learners. If learners have certain learning styles, then what would teaching style look like? Or what teaching behavior would elicit certain learning behaviors? For example, if the intent is to train managers in participative management, what teaching behaviors will bring this about?

Teaching is viewed by many as an intuitive, mystic kind of talent which individuals possess. This has resulted in "giving license" to any person who wishes to teach because anyone's intuition and mysticism are as good as another's. "Individual idiosyncratic behavior has been the way teaching has been conducted and encouraged" (Mosston, 1977, p. 9).

The Spectrum of Teaching Styles (Mosston, 1966, 1972) was developed to provide "a way to identify whether or not a teacher's action is congruent with the teacher's intent" (Mosston, 1977, p. 9), and to "Highlight the relationships between different teaching styles rather than their disparity" (Mosston, 1977, p. 10).

This approach assumes that teaching behavior must be deliberate and that teachers can be trained to use alternative behaviors to meet certain contingencies and to fit various learning styles.

The basic assumptions are:

(a) Teaching behavior is a chain of decision making

(b) Decisions are made prior to the teaching-learning transaction

(c) Decisions are made about doing (teaching)

(d) Decisions are made concerning evaluation of the performance during the teaching sequence (Mosston, 1977, p. 11).

"The next concept identifies who can make the decisions. Both

teacher and learner can make decisions from minimum to maximum" (Mosston, 1966, p. 72).

Using these assumptions, a variety of teaching styles may be identified and differentiated:

1. The command style is evident when the teacher makes maximum decisions and the learner's role is to follow instructions and perform as demonstrated.

2. The practice style can be observed by noting a shift in specific decisions from teachers to learners. Students learn the decisions necessary for practicing and performing skills which require precision, repetition, and recall

3. The reciprocal style provides for a greater shift in decisions to the learners, who usually work in pairs, namely, specific evaluative decisions. In this case:

> the learners practice the use of criteria (designed by the teacher) and are engaged in skills of observing and listening, comparing and contrasting, concluding and communicating results to a partner. Immediate feedback and cooperative behavior are not only well documented as imperative elements in learning - they are, indeed, desirable social skills (Mosston, 1977, pp. 12-13).

This style was recently described by Lipman (1980) in an article entitled "Talmudic Ideas Used in the Ghetto." The teacher who based his teaching style on what "the Talmud teaches, that if you don't learn out loud with someone else you're not learning" (Lipman, 1980, p. 22) has successfully instituted a peer tutoring program in a ghetto school. The grades and behavior of the children who serve as tutors have significantly improved as well as their attitudes toward school and learning.

4. The "slanty rope" or individual program style permits the teacher to manipulate the subject matter in such a manner as to provide the learner with "full opportunity for self-motivated learning, self assessment, and decision making over a relatively prolonged period of time" (Mosston, 1966, p. 97). This style of teaching brings students closer to independent learning. Adult students seem to thrive in this style because they are treated as responsible adults. Teachers who first try this style reported that they were anxious about losing control of their class. As they gained experience and confidence in this style, they also realized that a new stronger and more lasting control system was being formed in the class.

Another contributor to teacher anxiety about this style was the reduction in teacher-initiated activities and verbal communications. Anxiety can be reduced when teachers discover the opportunity to observe individual students and communicate with them while the rest of the group is engaged in learning.

This style is also a challenge to the leadership style of teachers. Will they be able to avoid direct confrontations? Will they be able to move people and groups towards their educational goals, without interactions that make evident power status differential? Success in this style moves teachers closer to the process of andragogy and students to independent lifelong learning.

It is apparent that styles 1 through 4 accommodate conditions for acquiring basic knowledge and skills in any subject area. They engage learners primarily in cognitive operations such as recall, identifying, sorting, comparing, drawing conclusions, and operations

which relate primarily to past and present knowledge. "This includes: factual data, events, dates, names, computation procedures, rules, use of tools, performance in music, dance and sports" (Mosston, 1977, p. 13).

5. The guided discovery style. In contrast with the previous styles, the teacher "never tells the answer" (Mosston, 1966, p. 147). To implement this style, teachers need to make several adjustments; first, a linguistic one: instead of using exclamation words, they need to use question words. The next is a psychological adjustment: they must wait for the answer to come from the student.

This style of teaching trains students to use selection procedures in making decisions in a definite sequence. It is a process-centered approach which "invokes the learner's capacities for insights into relationships among entities, following logical sequences and discovering consequences, principles and concepts" (Mosston, 1977, pp. 13-14).

6. Problem solving style shifts many decisions to the students. The teachers present a question, a problem, or a situation which invites the learner to discover alternatives. Divergent (Guilford, 1967) thinking is welcomed because this style elicits many experiments and a variety of solutions. In contrast with "the single mindedness [convergent] of guided discovery, the teaching behavior which induces and produces discoveries by presenting problems seeks to develop the ability to find alternatives, explore them, and select the appropriate ones" (Mosston, 1966, p. 183). In this style students find themselves on their own making all the decisions, and they learn that the criteria for "correct" responses need not match the teacher's solutions. This

style is essential to the development of learners who are something other than responding robots.

7. Creativity. In this style the learners initiate activities, design the process, and evaluate the product. The role of teachers is to provide broad parameters, and to ascertain that the learners follow through with their stated decisions.

The last two styles invite the learners to go beyond the limits of "educatability" (Fletcher, 1977).

The most often enunciated educational goal, "to enable everyone to develop their full potential," cannot be taken seriously by teachers who lack the last two styles. Most teachers, have not developed styles which would enable people to operate at maximum capability. In my experience most educational activities have generally been guided by teachers who, at best, have adopted the guided discovery style.

As long as adult education in the United States emphasizes utilitarian (vocational) or basic competency skills, the teachers will use the styles that permit them most of the educational decisions. Even programs which advocate "enabling everyone to develop their full potential" seem to limit the "full potential" to vocational or work-related skills; hence they too will employ styles that are teacher-centered.

Adult educators who use problem-solving and creativity styles may find an appreciative and recurring audience from business and industry. Industrial and business training is placing increased emphasis on career development, life planning, leadership training,

and preretirement planning, which depend on creative problem solving.

Summary

Two approaches to teaching styles were explored in this paper. The first is a relatively static approach borrowed from management research and organizational development. This approach identified teaching styles based on Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs. Teaching styles, derived from this theoretical approach, can be seen as the interpersonal styles of behavior with others, which grow out of people's needs and are the means of resolving personal concerns. When people are unable to resolve their concerns and satisfy their needs, they develop anxiety "and anxiety is the direct cause of [their] defense systems and basic life styles" (Lafferty, 1975, p. 9).

The concerns are viewed as opposite pairs. The first pair is (1) the concern for security and (2) the concern for satisfaction. The second pair of concerns is (1) concern for people and (2) the concern for tasks (Lafferty, 1975, p. 9). The pairs ought to be viewed as motivating forces which direct the behavior of people.

Teachers have these needs, and when viewed in terms of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, develop definite styles of teaching.

Although this approach explains the behavior of many teachers, and describes their style and the personality factors contributing to their style, it does not present a clear training model that will facilitate changes in style. However, using a psychotherapeutic approach, changes in style may be possible.

Paying attention to teaching styles is not considered essential in "closed" educational institutions such as universities where

students have limited choices of faculty, and the faculty, secure in their tenure, do not see the need to change their style. However, in open educational settings which primarily cater to adults (students) who can choose similar training from other organizations, and who "vote with their feet," teaching style is essential to program success and continued survival. In these settings the "Life Style" approach may be helpful in discovering the least desirable teaching style for the enterprise. This approach may also provide criteria for hiring or firing the faculty.

Students may benefit from using this approach in identifying their own life style and seeking out teachers whose style fits them best or whose style is best suited for the subject area they are engaged in.

I believe that there are some helpful styles. The self-actualized and the humanistic-helpful style are universally helpful to students. The achievement style and the competence style are helpful only to learners with similar life styles.

In contrast to the life style approach, the spectrum design is based on the assumption that teachers can be trained in alternative styles. Mosston (1972) believes that everyone can change through learning and that teaching style is a learned characteristic.

Each style on the spectrum has a corresponding observation and analysis sheet. Observers and the teachers in training can easily identify whether their teaching behavior is congruent with their intent and fits the learning styles of the students.

Staff development activities in teaching styles can bring about

a better fit between learners and teachers and help teachers modify their styles to become more effective.

In our current state of nearly zero growth rate and an increasing need to shift people from one job to another, it is necessary to study adult teacher behaviors. In addition:

> it will no longer be adequate to produce knowledgeable people. Knowledge becomes obsolete too quickly. We need to produce people who can master change by changing themselves - people who are masters of self-directed learning, not in the sense that they learn on their own, but in the sense that they initiate and control their own learning (Knowles, 1980, p. 18).

Adult educators have an increasingly important job in meeting these challenges. Understanding teaching styles may make this process easier.

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